

**B**elgium's status as one of the smallest countries in the European Union (EU) belies its relative importance in terms of the economy and trade. With only 10 million inhabitants, Belgium accounts for some 3.2% of international trade, and is the sixth largest importer in the EU. Belgium is one of the key markets in the EU for Canadian companies wanting to

however, in recent years due to the pinewood nematode problem.

There are several opportunities for Canadian exporters for market niches in the Belgian construction materials market. One niche is the export of the Canadian model for modern high-rise buildings. Canadian firms are in an excellent position to sell their know-how in the construction of high-rise

dian producers and exporters and is a fast-growing sector. All renovation products, including finished wood products such as doors, panelling, flooring, garden articles, tools, decorative products adapted to local tastes, should find an outlet in Belgium.

Manufacturers intending to sell to the building and hardware products market can first try to penetrate the larger chains, many of which have a central buying office which allows them to buy directly from the source. As well, many of these chains have a procurement relationship with chains from neighbouring countries, forming buying syndicates to obtain the best possible prices from manufacturers around the world.

The best way to assess the Belgian construction materials market is to visit the large annual trade show *Batibouw* ([www.batibouw.com](http://www.batibouw.com)), which usually takes place in February or March, and is an important venue for introducing new building materials in the marketplace.

For more information, contact Paul Desbiens, Counsellor, Canadian Embassy, Brussels, tel.: (011-322) 741-0622, fax: (011-322) 741-0606, e-mail: [paul.desbiens@dfait-maeci.gc.ca](mailto:paul.desbiens@dfait-maeci.gc.ca) or Francis Keymolen, the Trade Officer responsible for this sector, Canadian Embassy, Brussels, fax: (011-322) 741-0616, e-mail: [francis.keymolen@dfait-maeci.gc.ca](mailto:francis.keymolen@dfait-maeci.gc.ca) \*

(For the unabridged version, see [www.infoexport.gc.ca/canadexport](http://www.infoexport.gc.ca/canadexport))

## Construction market profile

# Belgium

enter and position themselves in the continental European market.

Belgium occupies a major position in the construction sector in Europe for two main reasons: it has one of the highest private ownership rates in the EU, and since it is situated at the centre of the European Union, many multinational firms and other international organizations have set up companies and production facilities, which have boosted both industrial construction as well as public construction and infrastructure.

Belgians either live in traditional one-family houses or apartment buildings with the North American condominium concept relatively unknown.

Although brick is still by far the most popular construction material, other materials have begun to enter the market.

The penetration of timber frame construction has increased from 3% to 17% of the Belgian market over the last 20 years. The materials used for private construction are mainly of Belgian origin or from neighbouring countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, France and Italy, with the exception of wood which comes primarily from Scandinavia (particularly Sweden and Finland), and Canada. Imports from Canada have declined,

buildings, especially if they adapt this know-how to the Belgian context, in co-operation with a local producer.

In addition to the lumber market which is well represented, there are many other opportunities for introducing quality finished wood products such as flooring planks, doors, wall panelling, stairways etc., which are designed and cut to Belgian specifications but nonetheless retain a Canadian style.

Another excellent niche is technology transfers for heating and ventilating systems as Canadian firms have more experience than their European counterparts in dealing with insulation problems for both residential and commercial buildings.

The hardware and do-it-yourself (DIY) market is largely open to Cana-

## Turkey construction sector profile

*Construction is one of the fastest growing sectors in Turkey, mainly due to the high increase in population and rapid urbanization. There has been significant growth in housing and infrastructure development which offers business opportunities for Canadian contractors, suppliers of construction and building materials, manufactured houses and architectural and engineering services.*

In conjunction with the growth in the sector, the industry has also developed to meet the domestic requirement for basic construction materials and building products. In addition, there is a growing market for quality sanitation systems, insulation materials, coating and finishing materials, and manufactured houses. Although the market is highly price-sensitive

*Continued on page 9 - Turkey*